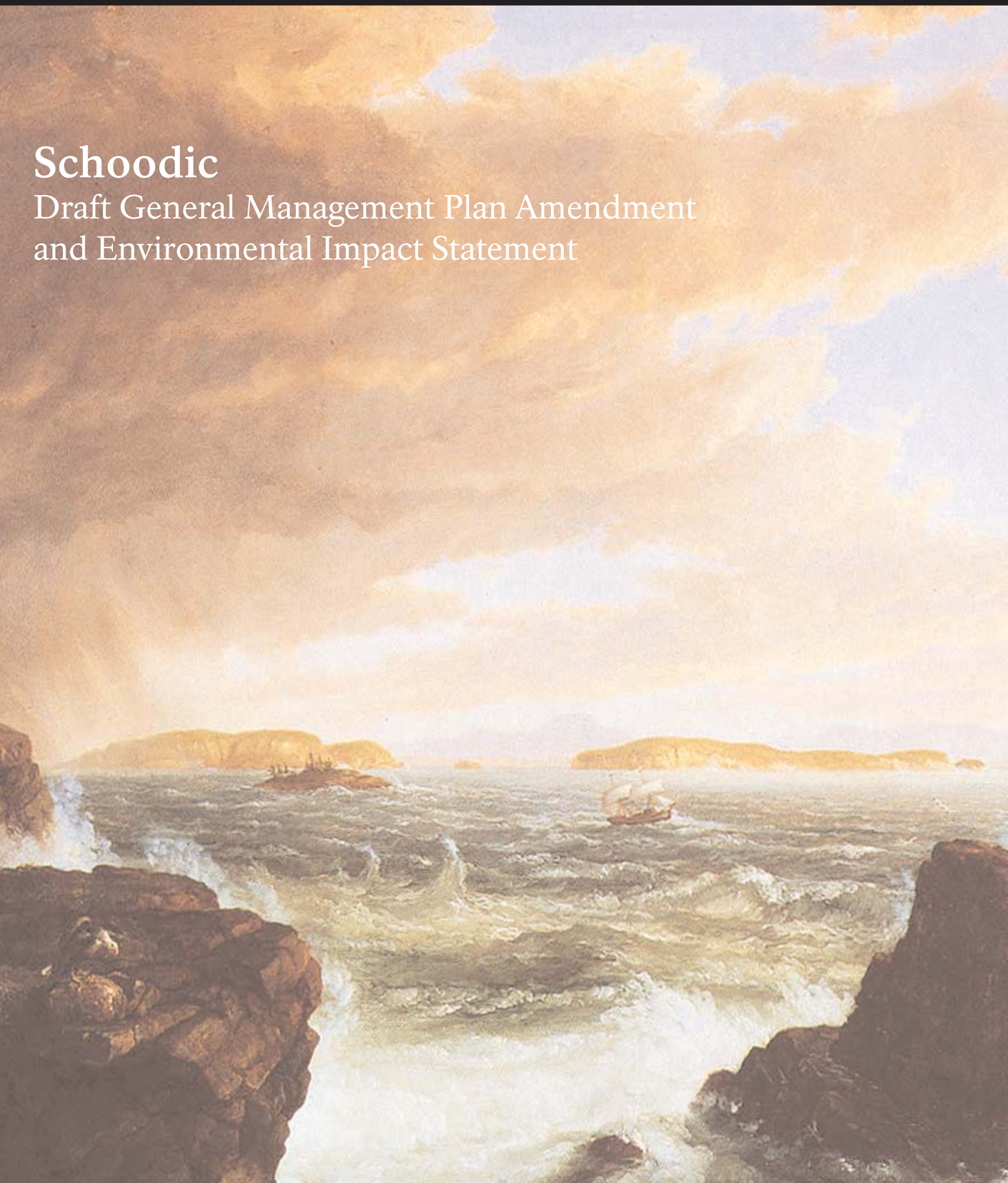
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Acadia National Park - Maine
Northeast Region

Schoodic

Draft General Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement



Cover Illustration: Detail of Thomas Cole, *View across Frenchman's Bay, from Mt. Desert Island, Maine, after a Squall*, 1845. Cincinnati Art Museum, gift of Miss Alice Scarborough.

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ABSTRACT

This *Draft General Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement (DGMPA/EIS)* documents the proposed management options for the Schoodic District of Acadia National Park over the next 15–20 years. As Acadia's *General Management Plan (National Park Service 1992a)* does not address the transfer of the navy base at Schoodic Point to the NPS, there is a need to provide guidance for future park use of navy facilities. This draft plan provides the foundation for decision making regarding, among other things, resource management, cooperative efforts and partnerships, visitor use, and operational efficiencies so that future opportunities and challenges can be effectively addressed. In addition, the environmental effects of each of the three alternatives are analyzed.

The three management alternatives include a "no action" alternative (continued current management) and two "action" alternatives for managing the resources and visitor uses of the Schoodic District. All include the revision of "management zoning" designed to conserve and protect natural and cultural resources within the Schoodic District, while allowing for visitor experience of such resources. The preferred alternative (C) would establish the Schoodic Education and Research Center (SERC) at the former navy base. The center would facilitate science and learning through partnerships among various organizations. Compared with the other two alternatives, this proposal anticipates the highest number of visitors and staff at the Schoodic District, while increasing opportunities for education and research.

PUBLIC COMMENT

This draft document has been designed to evaluate the impacts of the three alternatives considered and to provide the public an opportunity to comment. The public comment period for the *DGMPA/EIS* will end 60 days after the notice of availability is published in the *Federal Register*. Please send comments to the office and email addresses below. Please note that names and addresses of people who comment become part of the public record.

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For additional information, visit the project website:
http://www.nps.gov/acad/schoodic/home.htm

Aerial photograph of Schoodic (source: U.S. Navy)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Schoodic District of Acadia National Park was added in 1929. Between 1935 and 2002, the Schoodic peninsula was home to a U.S. Navy base located on 100 acres at Schoodic Point on the far southern tip of the peninsula. In 2002 the base property was transferred from the Navy to National Park Service (NPS) jurisdiction. With the Navy's departure, NPS must now decide how to convert this property from military to appropriate park use.

The purpose of a general management plan is to provide NPS with a basic framework for decision-making related to a variety of issues over a period of 15–20 years. A general management plan describes broad goals and objectives for the park. In addition, management prescriptions for the achievement of these goals and objectives are provided within the document.

Acadia's *General Management Plan* states that NPS will manage the Schoodic District to retain opportunities for low-density recreation, current (1992) use levels and parking lot capacities, and the existing naturalness and solitude. In addition, the plan states that NPS will not actively promote the Schoodic District or add facilities to the area. All of the Schoodic District is zoned as a "Natural Area," which directs NPS to manage the area to conserve and protect natural resources and ecological processes, and provide for their use and enjoyment by the public.

PARK SETTING

Acadia National Park is located on the coast of Maine and includes approximately 35,500 acres. Most of the park is located on Mount Desert Island. The park includes large portions of Isle au Haut (15 miles southwest of Mount Desert Island) and the Schoodic Peninsula (5 miles east of Mount Desert Island). The *Draft Schoodic General Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement* addresses the 2,366-acre Schoodic District of Acadia National Park, which is the only portion of the park located on the mainland.

The study area lies within the Eastern Coastal Region of the State of Maine, which extends from Mount Desert Island to Canada in a 20-mile-wide band along the Gulf of Maine (McMahon 1990). The climate of the Eastern Coastal Region is strongly moderated by the Gulf of Maine. Winter temperatures are warmer relative to those a few miles inland and summer temperatures are relatively cooler. The park lies in a broad transition zone between southern deciduous and northern coniferous forests. The combination of the climate and varied topography has resulted in rich plant and animal species diversity at Schoodic.

Human occupation of the Maine area dates from 11,500 years ago. Coastal groups living 3,000–6,000 years ago were separate from interior groups and are represented archeologically primarily by shell middens. Early historic use of the area was based on fishing and lumbering dating back to the late 1700s. Much of the study area (the Schoodic Peninsula) remained uninhabited by non-native people. In 1929, the Schoodic parklands were donated to NPS. By 1935, a Navy radio communications station on Mount Desert Island had been moved to the tip of the Schoodic Peninsula and the associated 6-mile Schoodic Loop Road on Schoodic had been completed. Beginning at the northwestern boundary of the park at Frazer Creek, the road provides visitors with a classic Maine coast vista of rocky shoreline, islands and a lighthouse. The proposed Schoodic Peninsula Historic District (not including the former navy base or coastal islands) is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a significant cultural landscape.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR PLAN

The purpose of this *Draft Schoodic General Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement* is to define direction for the management of the entire 2,366-acre Schoodic District of the park, including the former navy base property. The plan provides the foundation for decision making regarding resource management, cooperative efforts and partnerships, visitor use, and operational efficiencies so that

future opportunities and challenges can be effectively addressed. It also describes the existing and desired conditions for park resources to ensure the park's adherence to its mission statement. The intent of this plan is to uphold the goals of the 1992 *General Management Plan* while carrying out the new legislative mandates for establishing a research and education center at Schoodic.

As Acadia's current *General Management Plan* does not address the closure and transfer to NPS of the navy base at Schoodic Point, there is a need to provide guidance for future park use of navy facilities. The recent addition of the navy base property offers many opportunities for resource protection and visitor use. Its historic buildings and other facilities have great potential to support the park's mission; however, they also present management dilemmas for the entire Schoodic District. While legislative direction calls for a research and education center at Schoodic, details about the scale and operation of the center are left to NPS to determine. Those details appear in each of three alternatives analyzed in this *Draft General Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement*.

INITIAL ACTIONS

The NPS is undertaking a number of initial actions at the former navy base to prepare it for park use as well as to provide continuity of certain services. Immediate needs include modifications to facilities for health and safety, providing for limited public use, maintaining buildings and utilities, conducting educational programs, housing researchers, and managing resources.

CRITICAL ISSUES

Planning efforts for the Schoodic District included consultation with resource experts, visitors, park neighbors, local and state governments, and members of the public in order to identify their concerns and hopes for the area. As a result, the following issues were identified as critical for park management.

- **resource management,**
- **visitor use/interpretation,**
- **cooperative efforts/partnerships, and**
- **operational efficiencies.**

All are considered of importance to the park's mission and goals and were instrumental in the formulation of management prescriptions (statements of desired future conditions) and alternatives.

ALTERNATIVES

Three long-range management alternatives for managing the resources and visitor uses of the Schoodic District are analyzed in detail in this EIS, including a "no action" alternative (continued current management) and two "action" alternatives. All include the revision of "management zoning" designed to conserve and protect natural and cultural resources within the Schoodic District, while allowing for visitor experience of such resources. Some management prescriptions (statements of desired future conditions) for the four critical issues noted above are consistent for all three alternatives.

In addition, Acadia National Park has been selected to house a research learning center as part of a nationwide NPS initiative called the "Natural Resource Challenge." Called the Schoodic Education and Research Center (SERC), this new center will be the primary use for the newly acquired facilities at Schoodic. **SERC is common to all the alternatives described in this plan, but its management, scale, and cooperation with partners will vary.**

ALTERNATIVES ADDRESSED IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Alternative A
No Action

The No Action Alternative reflects existing park conditions. It includes ongoing activities while serving as a baseline for comparison of impacts with the action alternatives. Under this approach, the Schoodic District, including the former navy base, would continue to be managed by NPS as in the past, with some minor changes related to the Navy's departure. This would likely result in the continuation of visitors' enjoyment of a quiet, uncrowded experience. Five additional staff members are proposed under this approach, allowing for only

occasional visitor programs on the former navy base. Park information and interpretation would remain at current levels.

Overall visitor day use for the entire Schoodic District would increase by about 1% per year, in addition to some 1,800 new annual program participants at the former navy base.

Accommodations for 20 program participants would be available in dormitories. Traffic, already significantly reduced as a result of the Navy's departure, is expected to remain well below 2001 conditions as a result of this alternative. Management of navy base facilities would be minimal and focused on the protection and maintenance of existing facilities. The historic Rockefeller Building and powerhouse would be preserved according to *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (NPS 1995)*.

Alternative B
National Park Service Management

This alternative would combine the continuation of the park's current operation with some expansion to include the use of navy base facilities for park use, primarily through additional visitor programming. Overall management of the Schoodic District facilities, programming, maintenance, etc., including the former navy base, would be the responsibility of NPS. Priority would be focused on existing research and education and the preservation of historic structures. Unnecessary navy base structures would be removed. Over time, almost half of the base could be restored to natural conditions. Thirty additional staff members are proposed under this approach, allowing for a more intense use of the navy base for programming, research, and education. Educational and interpretive visitor information would be increased under this alternative.

A 1% per year increase in visitor day use for the entire Schoodic Unit is expected, in addition to some 13,500 new annual program participants at the former base. Overnight accommodations for 90 program participants would be available. As a result of the Navy's departure, traffic volumes under this alternative will still have been significantly reduced but they are slightly higher than those under the No Action Alternative. The historic Rockefeller Building and powerhouse would be preserved and rehabilitated according to *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (NPS 1995). The building would include offices and other space related to increased programming and visitor use. Removal of some unused buildings on the base could result in up to 40 acres of disturbed lands being restored to native plant communities.

Alternative C
Collaborative Management (Preferred)

This alternative would establish the Schoodic Education and Research Center (SERC) with multiple partners and is believed to be the one that best meets park goals set forth in the *Draft General Management Plan Amendment*. The approach relies on collaborative partnerships among the park and other entities designed to promote broad-based research and education. A new nonprofit organization would function as coordinator of programming/activities and would assist in site management (food, lodging, meeting coordination). Navy base facilities would be used for meetings, retreats, and special events consistent with the mission of SERC. The park would continue to sponsor research and work with other partners in developing laboratory, library, computing, and other facilities as a part of SERC. Sixty additional staff members are proposed under this approach, allowing for the most intense use of the navy base for programming, research, and education of all alternatives. Educational and interpretive visitor information would be increased under this alternative.

An annual increase of about 1% per year in visitor day use for the entire Schoodic Unit is expected. In addition, approximately 31,500 new annual program participants are expected at the former navy base. Approximately 190 program participants could be housed overnight in dorms and apartments. Traffic volumes would be lower than those experienced during navy base operations, but higher than those expected under the other two alternatives. The historic Rockefeller Building and powerhouse, along with the commissary and medical clinic, would be preserved and the interiors rehabilitated for expanded program use. Where National Register of Historic Places eligible structures are involved, rehabilitation would adhere to *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (NPS 1995). Non-historic and ineligible structures would be evaluated for

use/removal. Removal of unused buildings on the base could result in up to 16 acres of disturbed lands being restored to native plant communities.

ALTERNATIVES ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER STUDY

The following alternatives were considered but not analyzed in detail as they were considered impractical or undesirable and did not meet NPS goals identified for the study area:

- Conversion of the navy base property into an independent Navy Morale, Welfare, and Recreation facility for active-duty and retired military personnel.
- Restoration of the navy base property back to its 1935 appearance when the Navy first opened the radio station at Schoodic.
- Restoration of the navy base to pre-1935 conditions.

The potential consequences of the actions of each alternative were evaluated as to the effects they may have on natural and cultural resources, visitor experience, and the socioeconomic environment of the Schoodic District. Effects are categorized as beneficial or adverse and according to their intensity (negligible to major). In addition, cumulative impacts were evaluated for each topic. Cumulative impacts are defined as additive and indicate the extent of damage (or benefit) that is already ongoing at a site, as well as information about past, present, and future trends.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The following discussion summarizes impacts of the three alternatives. As a significant number of proposed actions/impacts are common to all alternatives, these are discussed as such immediately below, followed by impact discussions of specific alternatives. All impacts are summarized in detail in Table 2. For a complete discussion, please refer to Part Four.

IMPACTS COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

Natural Resources

The implementation of public transportation options (buses, shuttles) would result in minor benefits to local air quality within the Schoodic District. Limiting parking spaces in the park could potentially reduce emissions, but this potential benefit could be offset by visitors unaware of the space reduction inadvertently increasing emissions as their cars idle while waiting for parking. The proposed use of base structures containing less than 1% asbestos would result in a negligible risk to human health under No Action; similar, but slightly higher, risks are expected under Alternatives B and C.

Revegetation of social trails on Little Moose Island would result in minor, localized benefits to soils in the area. Construction of a 0.75–mi. trail on Little Moose Island would result in localized, negligible to minor adverse impacts to soils. Implementation of visitor use controls in critical habits may reduce erosion, a positive impact to soils. Moderate to major impacts to soils would occur from the general increase in use of the Schoodic District (unrelated to base use) over the next 10–15 years. Significant reduction of fuel storage, vehicle maintenance, and hazardous material handling would result in minor or moderate, localized benefits to soils at the base; negligible to minor regional benefits to soils would be realized.

Inventory/monitoring of vegetation resources, determination of acceptable visitation levels, and implementation of appropriate zoning could result in major localized benefits for vegetation compared to existing conditions on Little Moose Island; minor to moderate benefits could be realized in other less disturbed vegetative communities on the peninsula. Revegetation of

social trails on Little Moose Island and the construction of a 0.75–mile trail could result in major local benefits for rare plants and coastal headland vegetation. Monitoring/control of aggressive non-native plants will likely result in small benefits for freshwater wetlands. The acquisition of a conservation easement to the north of the Schoodic District could provide minor to major benefits to forest vegetation on the peninsula. Minor to moderate localized benefits to vegetation are expected by the removal of unused structures (e.g., fencing) in the study area. Ongoing disturbance of soils and vegetation as a result of facility construction continues to be a minor impact to the peninsula. The general increase in visitation over the next 10–15 years would result in possible major impacts to vegetation along some trails. However, reduction in use related to base closure could create a moderate benefit to vegetation in such areas.

Inventory/monitoring of coastal resources, determination of acceptable visitation levels, and implementation of appropriate zoning could result in minor to moderate benefits to coastal resources in intertidal areas of the peninsula. Similar efforts for the evaluation of coastal wildlife (including the common eider and other nesting seabirds) could result in moderate or major localized benefits. Revegetation of social trails on Little Moose Island and construction of a 0.75–mile trail could have moderate, localized benefits for coastal vegetation.

Inventory/monitoring of wildlife resources, determination of acceptable visitation levels, and implementation of appropriate zoning could result in major localized benefits for wildlife, including the bald eagle. Minor to major benefits to wildlife are possible through the acquisition of a conservation easement to the north of the Schoodic District. Negligible to minor benefits for wildlife are expected as a result of implementation of public transport options (buses) and by the base closure.

Cultural Resources

The inventory/monitoring of cultural resources in the study area, as well as the determination of acceptable visitor levels, would result in minor to major benefits to cultural resources.

Revegetation of social trails on Little Moose Island to their native state could result in minor to major, site-specific benefits to cultural resources. At the same time, ground-disturbing revegetation activities associated with trail construction on the island could result in negligible to minor impacts, particularly to archeological resources. Preparation of the National Register of Historic Places nomination form for the proposed Schoodic Peninsula Historic District would result in minor to moderate regional benefits. The use of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (NPS 1995) for guidance when evaluating new public transportation options will result in a benefit of unknown degree to the cultural landscape of the peninsula. Rezoning of certain lands on the peninsula from "Natural Environment Subzone" to "Preservation Subzone" would result in minor to moderate, localized to regional benefits for the cultural landscape. Negligible to minor, site-specific benefits are expected for the Schoodic Point restroom as a result of maintenance activities conducted according to *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (NPS 1995). Minor, site-specific benefits to the Rockefeller Building are expected as a result of proposed zoning (Preservation/Adaptive Use). In addition, adherence to these standards in planning maintenance/preservation activities would result in minor to moderate benefits to the National Register of Historic Places–eligible structure. The NPS acquisition of navy archives and collections is considered a minor, regional benefit to cultural resources.

Visitor Experience

The determination of acceptable levels of visitation and implementation of management zoning could result in minor to moderate impacts to visitors; however, improved visitor information regarding sensitive park resources may offset this impact. Revegetation of social trails and construction of a maintained trail on Little Moose Island would result in an overall benefit to visitors, while creating minor adverse impacts for those who frequented social trails in the past. Negligible to minor benefits to visitor experience would be realized by the connection of other trails on Schoodic with existing base trails.

ALTERNATIVE A: NO ACTION

Natural Resources

Reductions in vehicular use at Schoodic related to base closure, coupled with the reduced use of boilers on base, would result in negligible, regional benefits to air quality, while providing major localized benefits.

Reduction in use/demand for drinking water related to base closure is expected to have negligible to minor benefits to ground water supplies. Similar reductions in wastewater discharge are expected to have an unknown benefit (possibly moderate to major) to water quality in Arey Cove.

Negligible to minor benefits are possible for the common eider and other seabirds due to reduced human use of the area resulting from base closure.

The general increase in visitation over the life of the plan will likely result in negligible to minor impacts to wildlife around trails though these could be offset by unknown benefits of the significant decrease in human activity around the base.

Cultural Resources

The combined effects of base closure, the addition of a very small number of vehicle trips by program participants, and the limited park traffic unrelated to new programs are considered minor benefits to the cultural landscape, particularly to the Schoodic Loop Road, in that they would help in delaying major road maintenance activities.

Visitor Experience

Despite the slow increase in visitors, minor to moderate impacts to Schoodic Point and trails around Schoodic Head will likely occur at midday as a result of crowding. Minor impacts may occur at Frazer Point. The notable decrease in traffic as a result of base closure will provide negligible or minor benefits to visitors. The less military and more natural appearance of the former navy base and its much smaller human presence will contribute to a quieter, more peaceful visitor experience, a minor benefit when compared to 2001 conditions.

Socioeconomic Environment

The expected 1% annual visitor increase to the Schoodic District, coupled with the small number of proposed program participants (1800 per year) and staff (5), would result in negligible to minor benefits to the socioeconomic environment of the area relative to conditions under base closure. Other economic benefits of unknown magnitude will likely occur from employee/visitor spending in nearby communities and rental housing by staff. However, these are offset by significant cumulative adverse impacts to spending, jobs, personal income, community infrastructure, housing, schools, and the social fabric of the region resulting from base closure.

ALTERNATIVE B: NPS MANAGEMENT

Natural Resources

Reductions in vehicular use at Schoodic, coupled with the reduced use of boilers on the base, would result in negligible, regional benefits to air quality while providing major localized benefits (effects similar to those under the No Action Alternative). Proposed use of base structures containing less than 1% asbestos would create slightly higher risk than would the No Action proposal (negligible risk) as more buildings would be occupied under this approach.

When compared to the No Action Alternative, the slightly increased demand under this alternative for drinking water and wastewater discharge would result in negligible to minor impacts to groundwater resources and moderate adverse impacts to Arey Cove water quality.

The impact of slightly increased visitor program use on existing trails would create negligible to minor soil impacts when compared to No Action. However, ongoing, localized impacts to soils could increase to major. Impacts to soils of overall trail use in the study area are negligible. Removal of base buildings and restoration of 40 acres of disturbed lands would result in a major, localized benefit to both soils and vegetation. As is also the case under Alternative C, implementation of a comprehensive hiking plan for the peninsula could create a minor to moderate reduction in soil erosion when compared to No Action.

Trail use by program participants could result in minor to moderate localized impacts to soils and vegetation when compared to No Action.

The addition of directed programming to sensitive, infrequently used intertidal areas could result in minor to locally major impacts to coastal resources; monitoring and use restrictions may mitigate the impacts to negligible or minor. Unrestricted use of intertidal areas by program participants may have additive and adverse impacts to common eiders and other seabirds. Impacts could be mitigated to negligible or minor by allowing only guided tours and limiting numbers of participants in these areas.

A minor, localized benefit to wildlife is possible from the removal of some base structures and the restoration of 40 acres of vegetation to a more natural state. The general increase in visitation over the life of the plan, including the addition of 150 program participants per day, may result in negligible to minor impacts to wildlife. Increased overnight programming at the base could have additional minor or moderate impacts to some nocturnal mammals when compared to No Action. Directed or unregulated program use of the islands could result in minor or moderate impacts to wildlife; however, guided use or restrictions could reduce impacts to minor. Implementation of daily ferry service to the peninsula could have minor to moderate impacts to feeding eagles, though no critical habitat would be affected and no impacts at the park level to the eagle population would result.

Cultural Resources

Expected increases in traffic are still lower than when the base was in operation and impacts would remain minor to the cultural landscape of the peninsula, particularly the Schoodic Loop Road. Negligible to minor, site-specific impacts to buried cultural resources are possible as a result of building removal on base; impacts may be mitigated to negligible by the involvement of a professional cultural resource specialist in advance of such activities. Increased educational/interpretive visitor information related to historic preservation would have negligible to moderate benefits. Restoration to natural conditions of 40 acres of base land would result in a negligible or minor benefit to the cultural landscape of the potentially eligible Schoodic Peninsula Historic District. Landscaping sympathetic to the original 1934 design around the National Register of Historic Places–eligible Rockefeller Building is a minor, site-specific benefit to the resource.

Visitor Experience

The increased visitor use of the peninsula under this approach could result in major adverse impacts for visitors to Schoodic Point during peak-use times. Minor impacts could also occur at Frazer Point. Overnight visitor use of the base would create only negligible impacts to views of the nighttime sky. A general reduction of traffic from the baseline year of 2001 is offset by the construction traffic (highest under this alternative), resulting in overall net negligible or minor benefits to traffic levels. Slow–moving construction traffic could create minor impacts to visitors, particularly along the Schoodic Loop Road.

Removal of up to 15 base buildings, as well as the rehabilitation of other structures, could have short-term, minor to major impacts (dust, noise) for program participants. Restoration of about 40 acres of disturbed landscaping would have a minor or moderate benefit to visitors. Minor benefits to visitor experience would occur by creating a more campus-like and natural feel to the base area. Rehabilitation of the Rockefeller Building for education/interpretive programs and redesign of its landscaping could have minor to moderate localized benefits on visitor experience. Minor benefits for visitors would be realized as a result of improved parking and circulation at the base.

Socioeconomic Environment

The expected 1% annual visitor increase to the Schoodic District, coupled with an increased number of program participants (13,500 per year and staff (30), would result in major benefit to area socieconomics compared to No Action. Other economic benefits of unknown magnitude will likely occur from employee/visitor spending in nearby communities. Housing rentals by park staff may lend a negligible to minor benefit to the local economy. However, these benefits are offset by cumulative adverse impacts to spending, jobs, personal income, community, infrastructure, housing, schools, and the social fabric of the region resulting from base closure. These cumulative adverse impacts related to base closure are not as intense as those associated with No Action but are greater than those expected under Alternative C.

ALTERNATIVE C: COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT (PREFERRED)

Natural Resources

Vehicle use and use of boilers on the base, compared to when it was occupied by Naval personnel, would both be reduced, although both would be increased compared to No Action. Compared to No Action, impacts would be minor and adverse. Proposed use of base structures containing less than 1% asbestos would create slightly higher risk than would the other two alternatives (negligible) as more buildings would be occupied under this approach.

When compared to No Action, the increase in wastewater discharge to Arey Cove would result in moderate to major adverse impacts to water quality. However, when compared to prior navy operations, a minor or moderate benefit is realized. Demand for drinking water is greatest under this approach, resulting in negligible or minor impacts when compared to No Action.

Soil impacts caused by additional program trail use would be minor compared to No Action. Additional visitors could increase the likelihood of off-trail erosion with negligible to minor soil impacts. Impacts to soils from overall trail use in the study area are negligible to minor. Removal of base buildings and restoration of 16 acres of disturbed lands could result in a moderate, localized benefits to both soils and vegetation. As is also the case under Alternative B, implementation of a comprehensive hiking plan for the peninsula could result in a minor to moderate reduction in soil erosion when compared to No Action.

Increased trail use by program participants to and from Schoodic Head and elsewhere on the peninsula could create minor to major localized impacts to vegetation when compared to No Action. Directed program trail use could increase impacts to major, and limited access to guided tours could keep them to moderate.

A negligible to minor benefit to wildlife could occur from the removal of some base structures and restoration of 16 acres of land to a more natural state. The general increase in visitation over the life of the plan, including the addition of 350 program participants per day, will likely result in minor impacts to wildlife in the vicinity of the base and adjacent trails. Increased overnight use of the former base facilities could have additional moderate impacts on some nocturnal mammals. As under Alternative B, directed or unregulated program use of the islands could result in minor or moderate impacts to wildlife; however, guided use or restrictions could reduce impacts to minor.

Cultural Resources

Even with increased programming, vehicular traffic would be less than when the navy base was operational. Minor to moderate impacts are expected to the cultural landscape, particularly the Schoodic Loop Road for which maintenance needs are greater than under the other two alternatives. As is the case under Alternative B, negligible to minor, site-specific impacts to buried cultural resources are possible as a result of building removal on base; impacts may be mitigated to negligible by the presence of a professional cultural resource specialist during activities. Increased educational/interpretive visitor information related to historic preservation would result in negligible to moderate benefits, as is the case under Alternative B. The restoration to natural conditions of 16 acres of base land would result in negligible or minor benefits to the cultural landscape of the potentially eligible Schoodic Peninsula Historic District. Minor, site-specific benefits to the Rockefeller Building would be realized by landscaping sympathetic to the original 1934 design, a similar benefit as that under Alternative B.

The Collaborative Partnership Alternative C would expland maintenance capacity and thus provide greater protection for cultural resources.

Visitor Experience

As under Alternative B, the increase in visitor use of the peninsula may result in major adverse impacts to visitor experience for Schoodic Point during peak-use times. Moderate impacts are expected at Frazer Point. When compared to No Action, overnight use of the base could have minor adverse impacts on views of the night sky.

Reductions in traffic related to base closure would provide negligible to minor benefits to

visitors; however, increases in traffic related to additional programming could result in moderate to major impacts to the visitor experience. These impacts may be offset by the proposed expansion of ferry and other public transit options. Construction traffic would be less severe than under Alternative B, resulting in only negligible to minor impacts to visitor experience. As is also true under Alternative B, minor benefits to visitor experience would result from creating a more campus-like and natural feel to the base area. Removal of 5–10 base buildings, as well as the rehabilitation of other structures, could result in minor to major impacts to visitor experience, an improvement over the impacts associated with Alternative B.

Restoration of 16 acres of disturbed landscape at the base would have a negligible to minor benefit to visitor experience. As is the case under Alternative B, rehabilitation of the Rockefeller Building for education/interpretive programs and landscaping sympathetic to the 1934 design could have minor to moderate localized benefits on visitor experience. Minor benefits for visitors would be realized under both Alternatives B and C as a result of improved parking and circulation at the base.

Socioeconomic Environment

Compared to the other two alternatives, Alternative C would result in the most significant benefits to the socioeconomic environment of the general area. The expected 1% annual visitor increase to the Schoodic District, coupled with an even greater increase in program participants (31,500 per year) and staff (60), would result in a minor benefit to the socioeconomic environment when compared to the No Action alternative. Other economic benefits of unknown magnitude will likely occur from employee/visitor spending in nearby communities. Housing rental by park staff may create a negligible to minor benefit to the local economy, an effect similar to that under Alternative B.

The significant adverse impacts of base closure on spending in the area would be partially offset by additional revenue generated under this approach. Compared to No Action, minor benefits may be realized under this alternative for unemployment, housing vacancies, and the unfilled capacities of community infrastructure, schools, and the social fabric of the region.

COSTS SUMMARY *

	Alternative A *No Action*	Alternative B *NPS Management*	Alternative C *Collaborative Management*
Annual Operating	$ 1,057,000	$ 2,014,000	$ 2,364,000**
Construction (Non-recurring)	$ 0	$ 9,547,000	$ 11,538,000

* Cost estimates are preliminary Class C based on year 2004 dollars. See Appendix B for more detail.
** for Alternative C, it is assumed that the nonprofit organization would provide an additional $812,000 for maintenance and utilities.